

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

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INFO AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

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AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 6508

TEGUCIGALPA ALSO FOR SHLAUDEMAM

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GT, ECIN

SUBJ: PRESIDENT LAUGERUD'S VIEWS ON CENTRAL AMERICAN
POLITICAL AND SECURITY SITUATION

1. PRESIDENT LAUGERUD, DURING CALL BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY
SHLAUDEMAM AND CHARGE, DISCUSSED SITUATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA.

2. NEW DRAFT INTEGRATION TREATY OF SIECA SOUGHT O
EQUALIZE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES,
WITH RESULT THAT GUATEMALA WHICH HAD STRONGEST INDUSTRIAL
AND AGRICULTURAL BASE, AND LARGEST FOREIGN EXCHANGE
RESERVES, WAS BEING ASKED TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR HONDURAS
AND NICARAGUA. PARTICULARLY UNDER PRESENT CIRCUM-
STANCES OF LONG RECONSTRUCTION PERIOD AFTER EARTH-
QUAKE, THIS WAS NEITHER POSSIBLE NOR POLITICALLY
ACCEPTABLE FOR GUATEMALA. FURTHER WORK ON DRAFT
TREATY WAS NECESSARY LAUGERUD FELT. HE PLANNED CALL
MEETING OF CENTRAL AMERICAN PRESIDENTS SOON, PROBABLY
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IN OCTOBER, TO CONSIDER WHOLE QUESTION OF CENTRAL AMERICAN

INTEGRATION.

3. PRESIDENT STATED THAT PROSPECTS FOR PROGRESS FOR CENTRAL AMERICAN INTEGRATION HAD BEEN STYMIED EVER SINCE THE "SOCCER WAR" BETWEEN HONDURAS AND SALVADOR AND THAT THEY WOULD REMAIN SO UNTIL THERE WAS A SETTLEMENT OF THE DISPUTE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. HE CONTINUED THAT GOG HAD BEEN CONCERNED BY THE RECENT BORDER INCIDENTS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND HAD USED ITS GOOD OFFICES TO BRING THE CHIEFS OF STATE AND CHIEFS OF STAFF OF ALL CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES TOGETHER TO BRING ABOUT A CEASEFIRE SUPERVISED BY MILITARY OBSERVERS FROM THE CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES NOT INVOLVED.

4. PRESIDENT WAS WORRIED HOWEVER THAT RECENT AND CURRENT ACQUISITION OF MODERN WEAPONRY BY BOTH HONDURAS AND SALVADOR WASNOT ONLY POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS IN TERMS OF INCREASING THE RISK OF OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, BUT WAS ALSO DESTABILIZING TO THE MILITARY AND POLITICAL BALANCE IN CENTRAL AMERICA. BECAUSE OF THESE ARMS PURCHASES, PRESIDENT STATED HONDURAS WAS NOW THE STRONGEST MILITARY POWER IN CENTRAL AMERICA, FOLLOWED BY SALVADOR, WITH GUATEMALA AND NICARAGUA FOLLOWING.

5. FACED WITH THE DETERIORATION IN GUATEMALA'S RELATIVE MILITARY STRENGTH VIS-A-VIS HONDURAS AND SALVADOR, SOME OF THE GUATEMALAN MILITARY HAD BEEN PRESSING HIM (LAUGERUD) TO ACQUIRE F-5 SUPERSONIC AIRCRAFT. PRESIDENT HAD RESISTED SUCH PRESSURE, FEELING THAT GUATEMALAN PEOPLE WHO WERE JUST BEGINNING TO RECONER FROM THE MOST IMMEDIATE EFFECTS OF THE EARTHQUAKE AND WHO STILL HAD A LONG PATH AHEAD OF THEM ON RECONSTRUCTION, WOULD NOT UNDERSTAND THE MAJOR EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR SUCH SOPHISTICATED WEAPONRY. SHLAUDEMAN EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING OF AND SUPPORT FOR THIS VIEW.
ANDREWS

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